ADDRESS

OF THE

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

OF THE

NORTH-WEST TERRITORIES,

AND THE

REPLY

OF THE COUNCIL THERETO.

Fort Garry, November, 1875.

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NORTH-WEST COUNCIL.

ADDRESS.

At a special meeting of the North-West Council, held at Fort Garry, on the 23rd day of November, A.D. 1875, there being present the Honorable Messieurs Girard, McKay, Breland, Bown, Dubuc, Frazer, Tait, Bannatyne, Kennedy, Delorme, and McTavish, the Lieutenant-Governor was pleased to deliver the following Address.

GENTLEMEN:

I have now to address you in compliance with the Rules you have adopted for the regulation of the proceedings of the Council.

You met, for the first time after the formation of the Council, on the 8th of March, 1873, when I thus addressed you:—

"I have much pleasure in calling you around me to assist me in the administration of the affairs of the North-West Territories. The duties which devolve upon you are of a highly important character. A country of vast extent, which is possessed of abundant resources, is entrusted to your keeping, a country which, though at present but sparsely settled, is destined, I believe, to become the home of thousands of persons, by means of whose industry and energy that which is now almost a wilderness will be quickly transformed into a fruitful land where civilization and the arts of Peace will flourish. It is for us to labor to the utmost of our power, in order to bring about, as speedily as possible, the settlement of the North-West Territories, and the development of their resources, and at the same time to adopt such measures as may be necessary to insure the maintenance of peace and order, and the welfare and happiness of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects, resident in the Territories."

In again assembling you to meet, in what may prove to be the last, or nearly the last, meeting of the present Council, I have quoted these words for the purpose of congratulating you on the efforts you made to carry into effect the objects which I placed before you at your first meeting. Before proceeding to the ordinary work of the Session, I, therefore, think this a fitting occasion to review the work the Council has accomplished, and to place on record the results of its

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legislation and of its suggestions. The present Council are now only acting provisionally, and a new Council is to be organized, partly nominative by the Crown, and partly elective by the people, with the view of exercising its functions under the presidency of a resident Governor within the Territories themselves. I am confident that that Council will take up the work you began, and have so zealously endeavored to carry out, and I trust that they will prove successful in their efforts to develop the Territories, and attract to them a large population.

Though you had many difficulties to contend with, you surmounted most of them, and will have the gratification of knowing, that you in a large measure, contributed to shape the policy, which will prevail in the Government of the Territories, and the administration of its affairs.

At your first meeting, you passed an Act to prohibit, except under certain restrictions, the importation of spirituous liquors into the Territories, and the Parliament of the Dominion has since adopted your views, and given effect to them, by the passing of a law of similar import to that you formed.

I am glad to say that this measure has proved effective, and will, I believe, contribute, largely to the promotion of the well being of the population of the Territories, and to the prevention of disorder and crime. You also made provision for the appointment of Justices of the Peace, and in connection therewith you represented to the Government of the Dominion that the criminal laws of the Dominion should be extended to the Territories, and that a Mounted Police Force, under military discipline, should be established in the Territories for the maintenance of peace and order therein, and the enforcement of the laws. You have had the satisfaction of seeing these suggestions adopted, and of knowing that the Police Force which you proposed, has proved, and is proving, of the greatest service in the Territories.

Such were some of the results of your first meeting, and your subsequent Sessions were not unproductive of good. I will only mention, generally, some of the more important subjects you dealt with.

You were, and are, of opinion that the Militia Battalion in Manitoba should be maintained, and should be so increased that an effective force should be available in the Territories.

You proposed that Treaties should be made with the Indians of the plains at Forts Carlton, Pitt, and Qu'Appelle, and you suggested that schools should be provided for, that agricultural implements and cattle should be given to the Indians, and that teachers should be furnished to teach them the arts of agriculture.

You have seen a Treaty concluded at Qu'Appelle, and I am glad to inform you that Treaties will be made next season at the other points indicated.

You urged that Stipendiary Magistrates should be appointed, resident in various portions of the Territory, clothed with powers to deal with certain classes of criminal offences, and also with a limited jurisdiction as regards civil causes, and thai a resident Judge, with Queen's Bench powers, should be appointed to deal with graver matters, with an appeal to the Court of Queen's Bench, in the Province of Manitoba, in certain cases.

Your recommendation as to Magistrates has been adopted by the Dominion, and though power has been given to the Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, to hold Courts in the Territories, this can only be regarded as a provisional measure, so that I doubt not your proposal will be eventually carried into effect.

You called attention to the necessity of steps being

taken to punish the actors in the Cypress Hill tragedy, and your recommendation has been acted on by the Privy Council, with the best effect, as regards the Indian population.

You proposed that a monthly mail should be established between Fort Garry and Fort Edmonton, for the convenience of the public, and it is to be hoped that the private mail now carried for the use of the Police, and the Pacific Railway service, may prove the precursor of a much needed boon to the people of the North-West.

You asked that a Reserve should be granted to the Norway House Indians, who had been deprived of their means of livelihood by the introduction of steam navigation, and your request has, during the past season, been granted.

You urged that measures should be adopted to collect customs duties in the region of the west known as the Belly and Bow River country, and your representations were complied with.

You passed laws for the appointment of Coroners for caring for orphan children, for regulating the relations of "Masters and Servants," for "the prohibition of the importation of poisons into the Territories, and of their use in hunting game."

You asked that the existing highways, portages, and watering places, in the Territories, should be set apart for public uses, and that as soon as Treaties with the Indians were completed, surveys should be made of the lands where settlement had taken place, and some of these subjects have been dealt with by the Privy Council, but others still remain for their action. Such, then, is a brief review of the work that you have accomplished, and I can safely tell you, that you have reason to be well satisfied with the results of your executive and legislative action, for

during your regime, most important steps have been taken towards the establishment of law and order in the Territories, and towards the creation of respect amongst the people, for the authority of the Crown.

The foundation has now been laid for peace, security, the advancement of the settlement of the vast region you have ruled over, and for the securing of the good will of the Indian Tribes, and I can only express my confident trust that those who follow you will rear, wisely and well, a noble superstructure on the basis that you have established.

I will now, in conclusion, ask you to enter upon the ordinary work of the Session, and will suggest that you should, before you separate, lay down some mode of dealing with a subject, which is of the utmost importance, as respects the relations of the Government of the Queen with the Indian Tribes, and as regards their means of livelihood, while they are passing through the transition process of being prepared to earn a living from the soil. I mean the regulation of the buffalo hunt, in such a way as to prolong the subsistence afforded to the native tribes, by the wild cattle of the North-West, and thus to give time for their gradual civilization and accustomment to practise the arts of agriculture. I would also suggest that you should adopt measures to prevent the spread of prairie and forest fires.

You will now proceed to the discharge of your duties, and I am confident that harmony will prevail amongst you, and that you will exhibit the same desire to advance the best interests of the Dominion, which has hitherto actuated you.

The Council having deliberated, adopted the following Reply, at the session held on the 24th of November, A.D. 1875:

To His Excellency the Honorable Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects the members of the North-West Council, cordially thank you for your speech at the opening of this session.

We have endeavored to the fullest extent, to bear in mind the words and advice of Your Excellency the occasion of our first meeting as councillors.

The duties we were then and since have been called upon to discharge were of a highly important character.

A country of vast extent, possessed of abundant resources was entrusted to our government which though now but sparsely settled is, we believe, destined to become the home of many thousands of different nationalities, by means of whose industry and energy what is now a vast uncultivated wilderness will be speedily transformed into a fruitful and productive region where civilization and industry will prevail.

We have as a Council laboured with one mind and to the utmost of our powers to establish as rapidly as possible the peopling of the North-West Territories and the development of its present resources and have adopted such measures as we thought would be most beneficial for maintenance of peace and harmony amongst all races residing therein.

It is with feelings of no little satisfaction that we have heard from Your Excellency your approval of the efforts we have made to discharge the duties entrusted to us, more so as you have pointed out the many benefits

arising out of our legislation and suggestions which have been adopted in the North-West Territories by the Dominion Government.

We feel confident that our successors about to be appointed under an act of last session of the Dominion Parliament will with cordiality take up the work we have begun, and, favored by prompt effect being given to their proceedings will have every success in developing the Territories and promoting the happiness and welfare of its population.

We are instigated by natural feelings of pride when we look back at the many difficulties we have had to contend with and have been able to surmount and it will be ever before us that we were called upon to lay the foundation stone of the policy which we feel certain will prevail in the Government and administration of the Territories.

Your Excellency has congratulated us on the results of our executive and legislative action during our short-lived rule, and we heartily agree with you that very many important steps have been taken towards the creation of a wholesome respect for the law and the authority of the Crown in the Territories.

We perceived with pleasure the conclusion of the Treaties entered into with Her Majesty's Indian subjects in the North-West Territories, and feel assured that they will contribute to the civilization and benefit of the Indians.

We heartily thank Your Excellency for the kindly feelings you have expressed towards us, and cannot allow this befitting opportunity to pass, without expressing our cordial feelings of gratitude for the valuable assistance you have at all times rendered to us in the performance of our duties, and it shall be our aim to make the result of our labors of this session such as we can look back to with pride and satisfaction.

And now bearing in mind that this may prove to be the last meeting of the Council, as at present organized, we desire to take this opportunity of assuring Your Excellency that we entered upon the duties of our office animated by sentiments of loyalty to our Queen, and desirous of doing all in our power to advance the best interests of the Dominion and that when we retire from the Council, we will continue in whatever sphere in life we may occupy, to be actuated by the same feelings of warm attachment to the Sovereign, and loyal devotion to our country.